

CLAIMS 17 to 30 pending:

Claims 1 to 16 were previously withdrawn due to a restriction requirement.

17. (previously amended) An ink jet printing method comprising the steps of:
 - 1) printing on to a receiving medium which comprises a substrate coated with at least one ink receiving layer and at least one upper protective layer which comprises polymeric particles having film forming temperatures between 60 to 140 °C and a binder; and
 - 2) heating the printed image to form a stable image-protecting coating.; wherein said printed image is substantially retained within the upper protective layer.
18. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein said ink receiving layer and said protective layer are coated on said substrate simultaneously.
19. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein said protective layer is coated as an aqueous formulation on top of said ink receiving layer.
20. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein the printed image is heated under pressure to form the protective coating.
21. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein the printed image is heated by passing through a laminator.
22. (original) A method according to claim 21, wherein an inert sheet is in contact with said protective layer and passed through said laminator.
23. (original) A method according to claim 22, wherein said inert sheet includes release papers or liners, silicone release liners, casting films and papers, and polyester films.

24. (original) A method according to claim 22, wherein said inert sheet is used to impart a high gloss, embossed pattern or security symbol to the final image.
25. (original) A method according to claim 17, wherein said binder is polyvinyl alcohol.
26. (currently amended) A method according to claim 17, wherein said ~~particulate~~ polymeric particles comprises low density polyethylene.
27. (currently amended) A method according to claim 26, wherein said ~~particulate~~ polymeric particles comprises low density polyethylene spherical beads having an average diameter of approximately 12 μ m.
28. (currently amended) A method according to claim 17, wherein said ~~particulate~~ polymeric particles comprises spherical beads of a 7% acrylic acid/polyethylene copolymer having an average diameter of approximately 10 μ m.
29. (currently amended) A method according to claim 17, wherein the inks used to print the image on said receiving layer are selected from the groups consisting of aqueous inks and inks based on organic solvents.
30. A method according to claim 17, wherein said binder is a hydrophilic binder.